

ASSEMBLY BILL 1980

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ISSUE

The City of Los Angeles employs approximately 600 security officers. The employees are assigned to locations throughout the city including the airport, harbor, libraries, power plants, reservoirs, City Hall and other facilities. The security officers play an integral role in protecting the safety of both visitors and workers at the sites. They are responsible for the protection of city property against theft, vandalism and other offenses. In simple terms, the security officers are typically the first line of response to any disruption of the public order.

The role of the security officer has clearly evolved from the era of the night watchman into a more proactive approach. In recent years, there have been many situations where security officers have found it necessary to detain persons while awaiting a response from the LAPD or other sworn personnel. For example, there have been situations involving assaults, carrying concealed weapons, injecting illegal drugs and lewd conduct in front of minors. The increasing need to detain persons in these types of situations prompts the request to clarify the law.

EXISTING LAW

Security officers employed by the City of Los Angeles have requested amending Penal Code Section 830.7, which currently provides limited powers of arrest to certain public employees. The amendment would extend this limited arrest authority to the security officers, providing the clarification needed to assist with their responsibility of ensuring public safety.

Existing statutes do not provide clear authority for the security officers to detain a person pending transfer to the relevant police agency. This uncertainty leaves both the individual employee and the city itself exposed to potential liability. Penal

Code Section 837 authorizes what is commonly known as a citizens' arrest and is available to any member of the general public. In contrast, the security officers may be called upon to detain a person as part of their everyday job responsibilities and mission to ensure public safety. It should also be noted that some of the security officers would be authorized to detain persons who steal library books under Penal Code Section 490.5. It seems anomalous to allow statutory authorization for a security officer to detain a person for unlawfully removing a library book but not for assaulting a visitor or employee in the library itself.

THIS BILL

This bill would extend limited arrest authority under Penal Code 830.7 to security officers employed by the City of Los Angeles. This provision would clarify the authority needed to assets with the officer responsibility of ensuring public safety. This bill clarifies the authority of the Los Angeles Police Chief by authorizing security guards employed by the city to have the power to arrest if they enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the city instead of the Police Department.

SUMMARY

KEY PROVISIONS

- Extends limited arrest authority under Penal Code 830.7 to security officers employed by the City of Los Angeles.
- Allows statutory authorization for a security officer to detain suspects pending transfer to the relevant law enforcement agency.
- Pursuant to the City of Los Angeles and Chief of Police entering into a memorandum of understanding, the Los Angeles City Security Officers will have limited arresting authority.

